

November 18, 2005

Mayor and New Board Members Sworn In

By now you likely know that we have two new board members. As a result of the November 8 election, Frank Drake and Margaret Jones Stinnett won seats on the Board of Commissioners upending incumbents Chris Malone and Rob Bridges.

Frank and Margaret were sworn into office Tuesday night during the regular board meeting. Prior to the swearing in, Mayor Jones presented Chris and Rob with plaques of appreciation in recognition of their contributions to the town and for their efforts on the board over the last four years. Both Chris and Rob were extremely gracious throughout the evening and in particular during their final address when they thanked their supporters and congratulated Frank and Margaret for their victory.

Mayor Jones was also sworn in again after winning re-election. The fact that she ran unopposed is – I believe – a testament to the outstanding work she has done as our mayor.

Mandatory Water Conservation Stage 2

Following the Raleigh City Council's unanimous vote Tuesday afternoon to enter mandatory water conservation Stage 2, our Board of Commissioners also voted unanimously to adopt the measure Tuesday night.

Wake Forest is one of three communities receiving water from Raleigh, so we are obligated by contract to observe the mandatory measures. Raleigh also provides water to Garner and Rolesville. It sells water to Fuquay-Varina, Holly Springs, Knightdale, Wendell and Zebulon.

Fines of \$200 for first offense of unlawful use of water become effective immediately. The fine for a second offense under Stage 2 is \$1,000 and the third offense will result in water service being shut off.

Under Stage 2 restrictions, lawn watering is allowed only twice weekly; Tuesdays and Saturdays for properties with odd-numbered addresses and on Wednesday and Sundays for even-numbered addresses. Under Stage 1 restrictions, lawn watering is allowed three times weekly.

If you'd like to view the City of Raleigh's Stage 2 water conservation ordinance, visit http://www.raleighnc.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_2_86980_0_0_18/ORDINANCE%20N2.pdf.

Town Hall Closed for Thanksgiving

Town Hall and other administrative offices will be closed Thursday, November 24, and Friday, November 25, in observance of Thanksgiving. Our offices will re-open Monday, November 28 at 8:00 a.m. Although police services will not be interrupted, the solid waste and recycling schedule will be altered. Solid waste and recyclables normally collected on Thursday will be collected Friday, while solid waste and recyclables normally collected on Friday will be collected on Saturday.

November 10, 2005

Veterans Day

You will note that this week's blog entry is a day early. That's because we are closed tomorrow for Veterans Day.

November 11, is the anniversary of the Armistice which was signed in the Forest of Compiegne by the Allies and the Germans in 1918, ending World War I, after four years of conflict. In recognition of this occasion, we celebrate Veterans Day, which was formerly known as Armistice Day.

In honor of Veterans Day, Town Hall and other administrative offices will be closed, but we will re-open for business on Monday at 8 a.m. Police service and trash and recycling services will not be affected.

Rising Energy Costs and You

Rising energy prices are fueling a good dose of anxiety among consumers across our region and beyond – and rightfully so. Although there is no shortage of heating fuel for the winter, experts have suggested that supply and demand will likely raise energy prices to an all-time high. This, on the heels of record gasoline prices across the US this summer.

While the average family spends over \$1,500 each year on energy bills, nearly half of that goes to heating and cooling costs. This year, those costs could increase significantly.

Natural gas prices are expected to rise as much as 50 percent in some areas of the country this winter. The US Department of Energy recently projected that natural gas users could pay up to \$350 more for heat this winter compared to last year.

The wholesale cost for natural gas rose throughout the summer – even before Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit the Gulf Coast. Unfortunately, once those hurricanes hit, they caused the prices to rise even higher creating even higher demand and tighter supply.

It's interesting to note that nearly one quarter of our nation's natural gas supply comes from the Gulf Coast. At one point over 80 percent of that supply was knocked out. I read recently that 50 percent of that supply remains off line, so there is a significant impact on natural gas prices.

According to Angie Townsend of PSNC Energy, most natural gas users can expect to see an increase of at least \$18 on their monthly bill.

People who heat with fuel oil are expected to pay more as well - close to \$400 more this year, with propane costs rising a similar amount.

Again, the increase was caused by the hurricanes in the Gulf that disrupted pipelines that supply our state.

Electric rates have not been spared. In September, the North Carolina Utilities Commission approved an increase in the fuel component of rates for Progress Energy customers. The increase took affect October 1.

The NCUC approved an average increase of about 4.4 percent for residential customers, 5.6 percent for commercial customers and 7.4 percent for industrial customers.

Just as the price of gas has increased, the price of fuels used to produce electricity, such as natural gas and coal, has also increased drastically.

The 4.4 percent increase translates to an average increase of nearly \$4 per month for residential electric customers.

But that's not all. The 4.4 percent increase is just a fraction of what was going to be an even larger overall increase in the neighborhood of 11 percent. The remainder of the increase was delayed until a future date but is expected within the next few months.

A Word to Town of Wake Forest Electric Customers

Town of Wake Forest customers will recall the 3.6% energy rider applied to their utility bills beginning in August of this year. As a heads up, the rising price of fuels used to produce electricity may warrant an additional increase during the first part of 2006.

Obviously, we are concerned about increasing fuel prices. However, by making your home more energy efficient you can help offset a portion of these costs. For example, an inefficient component (windows, heating and cooling equipment, ducts insulation) of your home or a failure of one of these components to perform as intended can cause even greater financial hardships. It

is not always easy to pin-point the problem, but fixing it can make your home more energy-efficient and comfortable.

I strongly encourage our residents to take every step possible to weatherize their homes. Doing something simple, such as adding some caulking or even putting in some new insulation will prove to be a good investment.

Here are some other suggestions:

Caulking, Weather Stripping, and Air Sealing

- Add weather stripping and caulking to doors and windows. As much as 30-40 percent of a home's energy load is attributed to outside air penetrating the house.
- Add weather-stripping tapes that adhere directly to door or window frames for a tight seal.
- Fit foam or rubber weather-stripping into gaps around doors or windows.
- Install rubber or foam bottom seals under doors.
- Add a door sweep to seal the gap at the bottom of a door from drafts.

Insulation

- Check for appropriate insulation in the walls, attic and floor.
- Choose the right R-value, which is a measure of insulating power. Higher R-values mean greater insulating power, which provides greater household energy savings and cost savings.
- Insulation standards recommend R-30 insulation in ceilings. If your home has little or no ceiling insulation, considering adding some.
- Be sure to insulate pipes.

Water Heater

- Turn down the water heater's thermostat setting to 120 degrees. Most water heaters are set by the manufacturer at 140 degrees. Most households operate comfortably at 120 degrees, saving money on heating costs and protecting your family by reducing the risk of hot water scalding.
- When washing clothes, use warm or cold water – not hot water – and rinse with cold water.
- Install a low flow showerhead. Showers use less hot water than baths.

Heating System Tips

- Check air filters monthly and change when necessary.

- Limit use of portable or space heaters. A typical 1500 watt space heater, operated for 8 hours per day, will cost almost \$40 in energy during a typical 30-day billing cycle. Considering that a 1500 watt heater will heat only a medium-size room, using space heaters is an expensive way to heat a home.
- Close the flue when your fireplace is not in use.
- Keep your outside heating unit clear and clean.
- Make sure drapes and furniture are not blocking air vents or returns.
- Use sunlight to warm rooms. Close drapes and blinds at night to retain heat.

Tips for Homes with Heat Pumps

- If you heat your home with a heat pump, set your thermostat and forget it. Keep your thermostat set at the lowest comfortable level. The recommended temperature is 68-72 degrees in the winter. Every degree above 70 costs an additional 3 to 5 percent. For example, keeping your home at 75 degrees could cost nearly 30 percent more than keeping it at 70.
- If you choose to adjust your thermostat, avoid dramatic changes in thermostat settings. A large increase in temperature may cause the supplemental heat strip to operate forcing greater energy consumption and higher energy costs.

Tips for Homes with Heating Systems other than Heat Pumps

- If your home uses a heating system other than a heat pump, set the thermostat at 68-72 degrees during the day and – health permitting - 60-65 degrees at night. Setting the thermostat back 10 degrees at night can save 10-20 percent in heating costs.

Lighting

- Consider using compact fluorescent lamps or CFLs. CFLs use a fraction of the energy of traditional incandescent light bulbs and last up to ten times as long. CFLs are available in home improvement stores in the lighting section. Replacing a traditional light bulb with a CFL will save \$36 in energy costs over the life of the lamp.

Other Ideas

- Wear more layers of clothing and warmer, insulated clothing while indoors.
- Put extra blankets or a down comforter on the bed.

For more information on how you can make your home more energy efficient, visit the US Department of Energy's Energy Savers [webpage](#).

Town of Wake Forest Programs

Not only should our customers winterize their homes, but I urge them to consider enrolling in the energy-saving programs offered by the town.

We offer load management credits that can help electric customers save on energy costs this winter. For more information on the town's load management programs click [here](#).

You can also take the surprises out of your monthly utility bill with our Equal Payment Plan (EPP).

Once you enroll in EPP, you will receive a bill each month for the same amount. It's a great way to smooth the peaks and valleys of seasonal electric usage and enable you to budget with precision. For more information on EPP, click [here](#).

Be Careful Using Space Heaters

When energy costs start to rise, many residents begin looking for other heat sources. Space heaters, in particular, are often in high demand.

I want to strongly encourage Wake Forest's residents to be careful when using this type of heating source.

Although higher energy costs might make space heaters seem like a cheaper alternative, that's not always the case. The most popular type of space heater is the 1500-watt model. But it's important to note that these heaters can lead to even higher power bills if they are used too often.

It is impossible for a 1,500-watt heater to warm a 1,500-square-foot home. In fact, using a 1,500-watt space heater for eight hours a day to heat even one or two rooms in your house will likely cost you more than \$40/month. A better idea is to make sure your home is as energy efficient as possible and let your primary heating system do its job.

Increased use of space heaters may also affect the safety of your family. By themselves, electric space heaters aren't a fire hazard. Unfortunately, sometimes people put them too close to combustible materials, such as drapes and furniture. That's a recipe for disaster.

Also, in homes with small children, the heaters can be knocked over. Covering the hot power cords with a rug or curtains also increases potential for fire.

Other Safety Suggestions

1. Test smoke alarms. They are required by law.
2. Install a carbon monoxide alarm.
3. Do not burn charcoal indoors. Charcoal can give off lethal amounts of carbon monoxide.

4. Use only water-clear 1 K grade kerosene and store it outside the house. Gasoline is not the same as kerosene as gasoline explodes.
5. Always store kerosene in a separate container intended for kerosene, not in a gasoline can or a can that has contained gasoline. Kerosene containers are usually blue while gasoline containers typically are red.
6. Do not use flammable liquids to start or accelerate any fire.
7. A 36-inch (3 feet) clearance is required around all heating devices, fireplaces, radiant heaters, kerosene heaters.
8. When using a fuel-burning appliance in a bedroom, be sure there is proper ventilation to prevent a build-up of carbon monoxide.
9. Never burn wood in a fireplace made for gas logs.
10. Have your chimney or wood stove inspected and cleaned annually by a certified chimney specialist.
11. Always use a metal mesh screen with fireplaces.
12. Never burn cardboard boxes, trash or debris in your fireplace or wood stove.

November 4, 2005

Mandatory Water Conservation

The City of Raleigh entered a mandatory water conservation stage Tuesday night. Raleigh City Manager J. Russell Allen told city council members that there is enough water supply storage for the rest of the calendar year by 20 days, based on the current 30-day rolling average of 51.70 million gallons per day. Our area is currently 7.45 inches below the average year-to-date rainfall and there's little chance we'll make up any of the shortage in the foreseeable future since the immediate weather forecast calls for above normal temperatures and no rain.

Since Wake Forest is one of three communities receiving water from Raleigh (the other two are Garner and Rolesville), we are obligated by contract to observe the mandatory measures. Violation of the mandatory water conservation ordinance is \$50 for the first violation and \$500 for any subsequent violations. Warnings will be given to violators until Nov. 8 when the fines will be implemented.

Mandatory Conservation Measures

Irrigation is the top conservation measure water customers need to observe.

Outdoor mandatory water conservation measures include:

- Irrigate only when plants need water. Do not apply more than one inch of water per week;

- Direct watering of impervious surfaces is prohibited;
- Watering by automatic spray irrigation systems is restricted to between 10 p.m. to midnight and midnight to 5 a.m.;
- Watering by non-automatic spray irrigation systems is restricted to 6 p.m. to midnight and from midnight to 6 a.m.;
- Watering by automatic or non-automatic spray irrigation systems is allowed between 6:00 p.m. and midnight and midnight and 6:00 a.m. on the following days – properties with even-numbered addresses may water Wednesday, Friday and Sunday only; properties with odd-numbered addresses may water on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday only;
- Watering by hand-held, hose-end watering devices may be applied between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. any day of the week;
- Watering by low-volume drip irrigation may be used at any time of the week at any time of the day;
- No water may be added to any decorative fountain, pool or pond except to maintain aquatic life;
- No swimming or wading pools may be filled after Nov. 2, 2005, except to provide for proper operation and sanitary pool conditions;
- Washing of areas such as sidewalks, patios, decks driveways, parking lots, streets and exterior building surfaces is prohibited except by commercial pressure washing companies;
- Vehicles may be washed only at professional vehicle washing establishments;
- New lawn establishment permits may be obtained from the City of Raleigh Public Utilities Department to allow for watering for 45 days for plantings installed during the restriction period or within 30 days prior to the restrictions;
- Leaking water services or plumbing must be repaired within 24 hours of written notification by the Public Utilities Director.

Indoor water conservation measures include:

- No serving of water in a public restaurant except upon request;
- Hotel/motel/beds and breakfast inns will ask guests spending more than one night to use their towels and bed linens more than once between laundering; and,
- Commercial and industrial customers should review their water uses and where feasible, install recycle systems.

Loose Leaf Collection Begins

We have resumed our annual loose leaf collection program.

We encourage our residents to rake their leaves into piles at the curb by 7:00 a.m. on their regularly scheduled weekly collection day because our crews will follow the normal yard waste collection schedule. Residents should also avoid creating piles in the street. Finally, when set out on the curb for collection, leaves must be free of limbs, trash and debris.

Limbs and brush may also be placed at the curb in a pile separate from leaves but they must conform to the following guidelines: Limbs and brush larger than one inch but smaller than six inches in diameter must be no longer than six feet. Limbs and logs larger than 6 feet in diameter must not exceed two feet. Logs must not exceed 10 inches in diameter.

Anyone who wants to request mulch should contact Betty Pearce at 554-6120.

For more information about leaf collection and the town's yard waste collection schedule, be sure to visit the [yard waste](#) section of our website.

Community Response Team returns to Mississippi

It looks as though the families of 32 police officers in Gulf Port, Mississippi, will have something to be thankful for after all this holiday season - thanks to the efforts of our local Community Response Team (CRT).

A second CRT will leave Wake Forest on November 17 and embark for the area ravaged by Hurricane Katrina. Unlike the first crew that left here September 22, this group will specifically assist the families of the town's police officers.

Besides assisting with cleanup efforts, team members, including Police Officers Greg Harrington, Jeff Leonard, Jeremy Morris, Kim Warren, and Don Griesedieck, will accompany the children of the needy families to the local Wal-Mart and give them \$100 to spend however they wish.

The team is accepting monetary donations or new, unwrapped toys between now and November 16. Monetary donations to the Wake Forest Community Response Team intended for the November trip should be clearly indicated and can be made at the downtown SunTrust Bank or mailed to 353 South White Street, Wake Forest, NC 27587 - attention Lisa Newhouse. Donations of unwrapped toys should be directed to Jeff Leonard and can be dropped off at the Wake Forest Police Department between 8 a.m. and midnight.

The team will return November 23 – the day before Thanksgiving.

Friendly Reminder - Don't Forget to Vote

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!



**Tuesday,
November 8**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 856-6240